

**CEPPS/IRI QUARTERLY REPORT: April 1 – June 30, 2005**  
**MOROCCO: POLITICAL PARTY BUILDING**  
**USAID Cooperative Agreement No DGC-A-00-01-00004-00**  
**Project Dates: March 2004 – December 2005**  
**Total Budget: \$1,250,000 Expenses to Date: \$415,876**  
**Project 7091**

## **I. SUMMARY**

The quarter's activities focused on three program priorities. First, IRI continues its political party training series for local and regional level party activists. Training was held in Marrakech in May with 9 parties. Second, IRI coordinated a meeting between three Turkish AKP parliamentarians for multi-party discussions with Moroccan political parties. Finally, IRI continues to expand its community action projects. IRI and Citizenship Forum completed a series of workshops and roundtables in the Casablanca districts of Sidi Moumen and Sidi Othmane.

IRI is working to strengthen party structures at the local and regional levels, improve internal democracy and communication within parties, and strengthen party outreach and membership development capabilities. IRI is also encouraging democratic reform within the parties by promoting increased transparency and accountability among elected officials and encouraging community associations to become more involved in issue advocacy and community activities.

## **II BACKGROUND**

Having completed successive parliamentary and municipal council elections in 2002 and 2003, respectively, Morocco stands at the forefront of the Arab world for its progress along the path of democratic political reform. In a process begun under King Hassan II and accelerated under Mohammed VI, Morocco has produced both symbolic gestures and tangible results in a break with its political past. Significant expenditures devoted to voter education and registration in the period leading up to the 2002 parliamentary elections, the adoption of a party list system, and an expansion of the electorate during the 2003 municipal elections to include Moroccans 18 to 20 years of age count among the positive accomplishments the country has made over the past two years. With thirty-five women now sitting in the Moroccan parliament and a multiplicity of political parties, Morocco without a doubt deserves recognition for its progress on democratic governance.

And yet, for all of Morocco's democratic advances in recent years, the country continues to suffer from profound political challenges. Despite a history of multiparty politics, a vibrant NGO community and regular elections dating to independence in 1956, Morocco remains in many respects a liberalized autocracy. Its recent political history has also included political fragmentation by the Palace, manipulation at the ballot box, and the co-opting or removal of political opposition. The strict enforcement of electoral rules pertaining to vote-buying in the 2002 parliamentary election should have generated

increased optimism among voters. Nevertheless, Morocco's historic secular political parties have proven incapable of seizing upon reform opportunities and voter turnout remains at levels witnessed during elections that were not democratic.

Plagued by sclerotic leadership and consumed with factional infighting, Morocco's traditional political parties remain primarily personality and patronage based organizations, lacking coherent platforms. Few parties practice democracy internally and many party activists at the local and provincial levels complain about the undemocratic nature of decision-making within parties and their lack of input in the selection of party office holders, candidates, or platform development. This situation has produced growing apathy on the part of the public towards political participation and the view that political parties are instruments of corruption and nepotism. In public opinion polling conducted by IRI prior to the 2002 parliamentary elections only 5% of Moroccans identified themselves as party members. A further 68% said they did not know what distinguished one party from another, and only 21% believed that political party platforms and programs reflected the needs and priorities of the Moroccan public.

IRI believes there is political will at the highest levels to institute democratic reform in Morocco. Because Morocco has a monarchic system of government the deepening of democratic norms can potentially have significant demonstrative value elsewhere in the region. However, the extent to which the space for political participation is further broadened depends in large part on the ability of political parties and other elements of Moroccan civil society to come to the fore as responsible and transparent democratic actors.

### **Current Political Dynamics in Morocco**

Despite much discussion about political party reform, the King did not convene the council of ministers to approve the draft political reform proposal in order to forward it for consideration to parliament until the end of this quarter, casting doubt on his desire to see the changes implemented in the near future.

The Popular Movement and the National Popular Movement announced their fusion during the quarter. Talks with party officials revealed that the fusion has not produced any immediate changes in the party structure. Plans have not yet been set for making the necessary changes in party coordination. The party merger has precipitated some party switching at the municipal level among elected officials.

The Parti de la Justice et du Développement (PJD) has been on trips abroad to Spain, Algeria, Jordan, Turkey, to meet their conservative counterparts and enhance their international credentials. The PJD is clearly setting the stage for eventual participation in a Moroccan government, and is laying the groundwork for productive relations with Morocco's key diplomatic partners.

The proliferation of Moroccan political parties continues. There are now over 40 parties, including the new Berber-based Amazigh Democrat party. A new leftist Islamist party

has also been formed. They are considered to be more moderate than the PJD. Many of the founding members are from USFP, PPS and the smaller leftist parties. They have not yet communicated their platform to the public.

The Palace has announced long anticipated personnel changes in its governing bodies. Several walis, prominent officials within the four sovereign ministries, and selected members of the royal entourage have been reshuffled, and redirected to new positions. There were a few surprises. The Wali of Casablanca, with whom IRI enjoyed good relations, has been recalled to the head offices of the Ministry of the Interior (MOI), reducing his political and economic influence. Mr. Benmoussa, the Secretary General of the MOI, from whom IRI is seeking authorization for political polling, may be promoted to Minister of the Interior. Other confidants of former Interior Minister Driss Basri have been moved to less influential positions, and were replaced by school classmates and contemporaries of the current King. The reshuffle lays the groundwork for an eventual regionalization of Moroccan government and finances.

### **III. QUARTERLY ACTIVITIES**

During the quarter, IRI continued to build relations with political party officials from all the major parties represented in parliament, as well as several smaller, reform-minded parties. IRI Country Director Sarah Johnson held regular consultations with the top leadership of several parties – PJD, USFP, ADL, MNP/MP, UD, and the PRE – to discuss internal party dynamics and activities, and provide feedback regarding the results of IRI’s regional training sessions. These discussions were highly productive in gauging the political will of key decision-makers to implement several of the techniques discussed at the training seminars with lower-level party activists. There appears to be strong support on the part of the national leadership of several parties to strengthen grassroots support, and offer increased training opportunities to activists.

Several parties have commenced preparations for the elections, and have requested IRI’s assistance in providing targeted assistance for their party members in areas of communication, electoral planning and organization. Other parties, such as the recently merged United Popular Movement (UMP), have recognized IRI for its ability to bring party members together, improve internal communications processes, and help the party undergo significant structural changes.

IRI continues to facilitate relations with local officials in Casablanca, including the wali, council presidents in Sidi Moumen and Sidi Othmane. IRI is also collaborating with local development associations active in impoverished areas of the city. IRI is forging new relationships at the municipal level with the majority PJD officials in Meknes, and the city council in Essouira, led by the country’s first female mayor, Asma Chaabi.

## **Training**

This quarter IRI held the second round of political training sessions with party activists from the Marrakech region. Approximately 100 participants from nine parties took part in the sessions, which covered pre-election strategies and voter communication techniques. Terence Pfaff, Chief of Staff to the New Hampshire House Speaker and former state representative, and Karen Hanretty, Communications Director for the California Republican Party, conducted the training sessions.

The second round of training, which targeted local and regional elected officials, and national-level election coordinators from Marrakech, focused on helping political party activists and elected officials to begin developing strategic and organizational plans for the 2007 elections. The sessions covered party structure and organizational planning, internal communications, message development, media strategy and voter outreach.

## **One-on-one consultations with party leadership**

IRI has been successful in increasing relations with the top political leadership in Morocco, and meets with the secretary generals of several parties on a regular basis. These meetings provide an opportunity for IRI to engage party leadership on issues related to platform formation, internal transparency, party activities, voter outreach and advance preparations for the 2007 elections. IRI also uses these meetings to give the officials individual feedback from the training sessions, make recommendations based on the problems discussed at trainings, and plan for follow-on activities. IRI has benefited from the openings provided by the proposed law on political party reform to engage political leaders on several potentially sensitive topics, and encourage party officials to take steps to democratize their organizations internally. In the coming quarter, IRI will engage party leaders on the results of the baseline political poll conducted by the Institute.

## **Polling**

IRI has been working with LMS Marketing, a respected Moroccan polling firm, to complete the first of three public opinion polls. This poll will provide statistical benchmarks to measure the level of public participation in the political process and popular attitudes towards political parties and the political environment over the life of the program. IRI Country Director Sarah Johnson will present the data to top leadership in several political parties, and use results to sensitize political leaders to the importance of political reform and constituent outreach. IRI will then conduct training sessions for party activists charged with communications and outreach, in order to assist parties in developing more modern communication and recruitment techniques.

IRI plans on re-doing the field work for the first poll due to a low response rate which affected the confidence intervals of the poll. The marketing firm, LSM Marketing, has agreed with our assessment and is working to re-do the field work in July. IRI has

requested pre-authorization from the government for this poll, hoping it will increase interviewer confidence and the response rate. IRI has sent a letter to the Secretary General of the Ministry of the Interior to request a meeting to discuss the political poll, and eventual authorization.

### **Community action projects**

IRI's local governance program is moving forward in Casablanca. In April, Citizenship Forum (CF) and IRI co-hosted a round table on Urban Planning and Economic Development, inviting several topical experts, city officials, elected officials, concerned business owners and NGO activists to discuss principle issues in urban planning and development facing the greater Casablanca region. A high-level representative of the Ministry of Territorial Development and Housing, and Mr. Brejda, a councilor on the Casablanca City Council, presented Casablanca's current development plans, and highlighted obstacles in achieving these goals: corruption, a lack of public resources, and disorganization. The participants proposed several potential solutions for tackling these problems and increasing the accountability of city officials, urban planners and developers.

CF and IRI hosted the second round table discussion on Urban Housing and Development in May. Several urban planning and housing experts, business representatives, academic researchers, and government officials attended the session to present and debate the challenges facing the city of Casablanca in providing secure, soluble housing for its residents. Participants discussed and debated the role of the city and national officials in developing an urban development plan, and made suggestions as to how the city and its inhabitants could cope with substantial population growth and expansion.

In June, IRI and CF held a preliminary workshop on participatory democracy and government accountability in Sidi Othmane, bringing together several local development associations and councilors from the district to discuss and debate the challenges facing the community. Councilors elected under the banner of several political parties were present, including the Party of Justice and Development, and the Popular Movement. The event provided a rare opportunity for local residents and association activists to express concerns directly to their district council representatives. The participants' comments were informed and thoughtful, sparking a healthy debate and exchange between community members and the district representatives. This event laid the groundwork for collaboration on civic projects between the NGO representatives and councilors, and created the basis for a network of local development associations within the community.

CF and IRI conducted outreach to other city districts (Hay Hassani and Rouche Noir) to inform the elected officials and NGO community representatives about our local governance program, and encourage their participation and active engagement. The second round of workshops in Sidi Moumen and Sidi Othmane will take place in beginning July.

## **Party Strengthening**

IRI hosted three Turkish AK Party parliamentarians for multi-party discussions and held the first official US government-sponsored program with Morocco's leading Islamist party, the Party of Justice and Development (PJD). The meeting with PJD party officials discussed the challenges of operating a party with Islamic influences in a secular system, as well as their experience as an opposition party. The AK Party's Deputy Chairman for Political Affairs, Mr. Cetinkaya, led the delegation, meeting with Moroccan Parliament President Abdelouahed Radi, as well as high-level officials from other political parties, and city council members representing the PJD. The visit falls within IRI's current efforts to strengthen political party organizations in Morocco and help parties lay the electoral groundwork for parliamentary elections in 2007. The meetings facilitated the exchange of ideas regarding Turkey's democratic development in parallel to Morocco, the Turkish leaders' experiences, and the techniques used by the AK Party to achieve its rise as the majority party in Turkey. The role of opposition parties in government and their transition into government was discussed. Both AK party members and Moroccan party leaders responded positively to the exchange.

## **IV. EVALUATION/RESULTS**

**Result #1: To reform established political parties and to strengthen nascent democratic political parties to make them more democratic, transparent, representative and effective.**

- IRI provided training for local and provincial elected officials, leaders, and activists. The second round of these training was held in May in Marrakech with the Koutla parties, the three Berber parties, PER and ADL. There were approximately 40-50 participants each day. These trainings targeted local and regional party activists with training in communications, message and outreach.
- IRI Director Sarah Johnson continues to conduct one-on-one consultations with party leadership, engaging officials from several political parties on the potential impact of the political party reform legislation. IRI used this opportunity to stress the importance of democratic processes with regards to platform formation and party organization, as well as to discuss the parties' internal structures and internal communication processes.
- IRI is working with UMP to assist the newly merged party to fusion its membership structures, and develop membership rolls to prepare for the 2007 elections.
- IRI hosted three AK Party parliamentarians in Morocco to meet with several of Morocco's political parties to exchange ideas and experiences.

The AKP members met the PJD talk about membership development and youth recruitment. These initial meetings later facilitated a return visit by the PJD youth leadership to Turkey.

**Result #2: To expand democratic political participation and encourage more competitive multiparty systems.**

- As a result of discussed ways to increase communication in the Marrakech region, and work together on common projects. Working with the Essouira city council on building trust and accountability between council and citizens, increasing public awareness of the council activities, and increasing the dialogue with citizens, giving increased opportunities to citizens to speak directly with their elected representatives.
- Following the training session in Marrakech UMP has formed an outreach committee, and has started to coordinate activities to increase internal communications within the party. also as a result of the training and our suggestion, they are building a database of their members, which they will use to distribute membership cards, and reach out to new members
- IRI's baseline poll measured the level of public participation in the political process and popular attitudes towards political parties and the political environment. IRI will present the data to the parties to enable improved constituent outreach.

**Result #3: To increase the governance skills of political leaders and representatives in national and local level bodies through training and strengthening parliamentary blocs or caucuses.**

- IRI is providing hands-on assistance and conducting trainings with its partner Citizenship Forum, to increase the responsiveness of local government officials at the district, city and provincial levels to the priorities of specific communities, and to develop community-wide development plans for the Greater Casablanca region. IRI and CF have completed several workshops and roundtables, and have initiated contact with and engaged local NGOs and public officials at all levels to participate in its municipal governance program.

## **V. FUTURE ACTIVITIES**

### **Training**

IRI is preparing its third round of local and regional trainings, which will take place in Tangiers on July 1-2. Several political parties, including USFP, Istiqlal, ADL, PPS,

MNP, MP, and UD, have confirmed their intent to participate. The trainings will be one-day intensive sessions for each coalition or party bloc, and assist the parties in their preparations for the upcoming electoral period. The sessions will cover communications, voter outreach, political and strategic planning, electoral list development and local party organization, as well as other pre-election-related issues. Each party has agreed to identify four individuals who will serve as internal trainers, and disseminate the training information to a broader audience within the party structures following the group sessions.

IRI is also planning follow-up activities for all of the trainings, to see if the parties are implementing our suggestions. IRI will discuss increasing communication between party members and officials; training of trainers, follow on trainings for other party members who were not able to attend the trainings, building of an electronic database of members and activists for use in organizing, election preparation, voter canvassing, and fundraising.

### **Polling**

IRI will coordinate a series of individual party training sessions on the polling results as soon as the data processing is completed. All of the parties have been receptive to half-day training sessions with the party leadership, as well as follow-on training with party activists involved in communications, outreach and voter contact.

### **Community Action Project**

The second round of workshops in Sidi Moumen and Sidi Othmane will take place in beginning in July.